



International
Cancer Genome
Consortium

ICGC launches new thyroid cancer project from Saudi Arabia

Toronto – March 8, 2012. The International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC) today announced a new project from Saudi Arabia to identify the genomic drivers in thyroid cancer, which will improve understanding and clinical management of this disease. The Consortium is ahead of schedule in its decade-long goal to generate high-quality genomic data on more than 25,000 tumors for up to 50 types of cancer that are of clinical and societal importance across the globe.

The King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre in Riyadh will lead an initiative to analyze papillary thyroid cancer, which is the second most common cancer among women in Saudi Arabia. Dr. Khawla S. Al-Kuraya, consultant and principal clinical scientist at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, will lead the project. Dr. Kuraya is also appointed as the director to the Department of Human Cancer Genomic Research, as well as director for the Research Centre for Children's Cancer at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre. Dr. Al Kuraya will work in collaboration with a Steering Committee comprising prominent researchers, pathologists, clinical trialists, statisticians and bio-information professionals from institutions across Saudi Arabia.

The primary reasons for selection of papillary thyroid cancer are:

- It is the second most common cancer among women in Saudi Arabia;
- It represents 13.4 per cent of female malignant neoplasms. The male/female ratio is 0.2:1 while thyroid cancer accounts for only 3.3 per cent of female malignancies in the U.S.;
- The King Faisal Hospital and Research Centre has the largest collection of papillary thyroid cancer samples in its tissue bank which was collected following the highest ethical and scientific standards;
- The tumor type was selected according to the burden of disease in Saudi Arabia.

"We are hoping that this project will be the key to understanding the biology of papillary thyroid carcinoma which will ultimately improve cancer prevention, early detection and treatment," said Dr. Khawla S. Al-Kuraya.

As of March 2012, the ICGC has received commitments from funding organizations in Asia, Australia, Europe and North America for 46 project teams in 14 jurisdictions to study more than 18,000 tumor genomes. Each ICGC member project is conducting a comprehensive, high-resolution analysis of the full range of genomic changes in at least one specific type or subtype of cancer, with studies built around common standards of data collection and analysis.

"The ICGC welcomes this large-scale investment towards the first comprehensive cancer genome program in the Middle East," said Dr. Tom Hudson, President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research and one of the founders of the ICGC.

Current ICGC funding member organizations include:

Australia	National Health & Medical Research Council; Cancer Council New South Wales; Garvan Institute of Medical Research; Queensland State Government; Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland;
Canada	Canada Foundation for Innovation; Genome Canada; Ontario Institute for Cancer Research; Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation; Prostate Cancer Canada
China	Chinese Cancer Genome Consortium; Ministry of Science and Technology; National High Technology Research and Development Program ("863" Program) of China; Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (Observer Status)
European Union	European Commission
France	Institut National du Cancer (INCa)
Germany	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF); German Cancer Aid (DKH)
India	Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology
Italy	Italian Ministry of Education University and Research; University of Verona
Japan	National Cancer Center; National Institute of Biomedical Innovation; RIKEN
Mexico	Instituto Carlos Slim de la Salud
Spain	Institute of Health Carlos III; Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation
Saudi Arabia	King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre
United Kingdom	Bone Cancer Research Trust; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Cancer Research UK; EuroBoNeT; Kay Kendall Leukaemia Fund; Skeletal Cancer Action Trust (Scat); The Wellcome Trust; Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
USA	National Cancer Institute; National Human Genome Research Institute; National Institutes of Health

For more information and updates about ICGC activities, please visit the website at: www.icgc.org.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Canada

Christopher Needles
Manager, Editorial Services and Media Relations
Ontario Institute for Cancer Research
Email: christopher.needles@oicr.on.ca
Telephone: +01-416-673-8505
Mobile: +01-416-319-5252

Saudi Arabia

Saad Al-Odaib
Assigned Press Officer
King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre
Email: sodaib@kfshrc.edu.sa
Telephone: +966-1-2055198
Mobile: +966-506469672